

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 H-02 SCSE-00 PRS-01 PA-02 SMI-01

(ISO) W

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R 031142Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 895

UNCLAS ISLAMABAD 6116

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CASC, PK, US

SUBJ: 1975 AMERICAN - K-2 EXPEDITION

REF: STATE 119690

1. AS PER REFTEL, PARA 3, DEPARTMENT IS REQUESTED TO PASS FOLLOWING PRESS RELEASE TO SENATOR JACKSON'S OFFICE TO BE PASSED TO HIS CONSTITUENTS AND THE PRESS. RELEASE IS BASED ON TELEGRAM RECEIVED JULY 3 (MESSAGE PARA 1) AND LETTER DATED JUNE 7 RECEIVED RECENTLY FROM DIANE ROBERTS 1(REMAINING MESSAGE). BEGIN TEXT:

ISLAMABAD - JULY 3, 1975

THE AMERICAN K-2 EXPEDITION IMMOBILIZED PAST 12 DAYS BY SEVERE STORMS WITH EXTREMELY HEAVY SNOWFALL AND HIGH WINDS. ROUTE FROM CAMP TWO TO CAMP THREE VERY STEEP AND EXPOSED. TECHNICALLY DIFFICULT WITH AVALANCHE HAZARDS FROM PREVIOUS STORMS. ALL MEMBERS ARE HEALTHY AND AWAITING SAFE CLIMBING CONDITIONS BEFORE PROCEEDING.

K-2, AT 28,741 FEET, IS WORLD'S SECOND HIGHEST MOUNTAIN. TEAM IS ATTEMPTING A NEW ROUTE UP THE MOUNTAIN'S PREVIOUSLY UNCLIMBED WEST RIDGE.

TEAM LEFT SKARDU MAY 2, ANTICIPATING FIFTEEN DAYS TREK TO BASE CAMP. 600 BALTI PORTERS WERE ASSEMBLED TO CARRY EQUIPMENT AND FOOD TO BASE OF MOUNTAIN. UNUSUALLY HEAVY SNOWFALL IN THE KORAKORAM, AND A LATE SPRING MADE TRAVEL VERY DIFFICULT. MANY PORTERS, ILL-EQUIPPED FOR WALKING OVER SNOW, REFUSED TO GO BEYOND DOKASS, A SIX-DAY TRIP

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FROM BASE CAMP. SUPPLIES HAD TO BE SHUTTLED BY EVER

DECREASING NUMBER PORTERS. THUS, BASE CAMP NOT ESTABLISHED
UNTIL JUNE 5. ABOUT THREE HUNDRED EIGHTY, FIFTY-FIVE
POUND PORTER LOADS OF EQUIPMENT WERE CARRIED TO BASE.

"WE'RE HAPPY TO BE HERE, HAVING ENDURED SUCH A LONG APPROACH,
AND ARE EAGER TO BEGIN THE CLIMB," SAID JIM WHITTAKER,
LEADER OF THE EXPEDITION. "ALTHOUGH THE MOUNTAIN IS
GIGANTIC AND VERY IMPRESSIVE, WE ARE ALL OPTIMISTIC
ABOUT OUR CHANCES OF REACHING THE SUMMIT," HE ADDED.

OVER TWO HUNDRED ROLLS
OF 35MM FILM OF SOME OF THE MOST
BEAUTIFUL MOUNTAIN SCENERY IN THE WORLD
HAVE BEEN SHOT.

PHOTOGRAPHS WILL BE USED BY NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE
AND SIERRA CLUB BOOKS, BOTH FINANCIAL SUPPORTERS OF THE
EXPEDITION.

TEAM HAS AUTOGRAPHED, AND SENT OUT BY RUNNER, NEARLY
2000 POSTCARDS SHOWING MOUNTAIN AND TEAM MEMBERS, CARDS
ARE GOING TO EVERY WHO DONATED TEN DOLLARS ARE MORE TO
EXPEDITION.

TEAM MEMBERS ARE: JIM WHITTAKER, JIM WICKWIRE,
STEVE MARTS, FRED DUNHAM, LEIF PATTERSON, DIANNE ROBERTS,
GALEN ROWELL, ROB SCHILLER, FRED STANLEY, AND LOU WHITTAKER.
END TEXT.

2. DEPARTMENT IS REQUESTED TO CONFIRM SENATOR JACKSON'S
RELEASE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS RELEASES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 03 JUL 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975ISLAMA06116
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750231-0152
From: ISLAMABAD
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750788/aaaadbac.tel
Line Count: 88
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 STATE 119690
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: greeneet
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 10 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <10 JUN 2003 by ThomasVJ>; APPROVED <16 MAR 2004 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <16 MAR 2004 by greeneet>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: 1975 AMERICAN - K-2 EXPEDITION
TAGS: CASC, PK, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006